

## **REMARKS**

The Examiner's reconsideration of the application is requested in view of the amendments above and comments which follow.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Meeks US Patent No. 5,137,604 in view of Meeks US Patent No. 5,263,268. Reconsideration is requested.

Although all of the claims are said to be rejected in the office action, the Examiner's comments and rejections are only set out in relation to claims 4 to 8.

For the avoidance of doubt, applicant submits that independent method claims 1 and 2 are allowable in their present form. These methods of operation of a drying apparatus utilizing a non-return valve and pressure control valve are neither disclosed nor suggested by the cited references, whether considered alone or in combination. Each method achieves a high rate of air flow through the pump while a low pressure atmosphere is maintained in the drying chamber to avoid any build up of solvent inside the pump.

Independent apparatus claim 4 has been amended to emphasize that the pressure control valve is arranged to admit air to the pump inlet from outside the apparatus. In combination with the non-return valve, this allows a high rate of air flow to be maintained through the pump as noted above to avoid build-up of solvent inside the pump.

It is asserted by the examiner that the pressure control valve 126 shown in Figure 2 of US5137604 admits air directly to the pump inlet when it is opened. However, in contrast to vent valve 144, valve 126 is not designated as a bleed valve and is not arranged to allow air into the apparatus from the surrounding atmosphere.

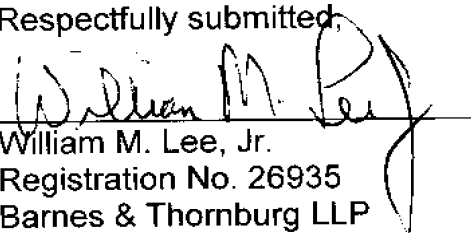
Even if the non-return valve disclosed in US5263268 was incorporated into the apparatus of US'604 as suggested by the examiner, one would still not arrive at drying apparatus of the form defined by amended claim 4.

It was also asserted in the Office Action that the references to features "adapted to" operate in a given way do not add any structural limitations to the claim. In amended claim 4, the word "adapted" has been replaced by the word "arranged" with a view to emphasizing that these clauses do form structural limitations.

Given the above, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance, and the Examiner's further and favorable reconsideration in that regard is urged.

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Respectfully submitted,



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